

TRANSFORMING NARRATIVE ENCOUNTERS

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In this article, two teacher educators examine two curriculum moments they have experienced, one with children and the other with pre-service teachers. They find possibilities for shifts in their understandings and insights into their own identity making and that of students. Drawing upon Connnelly and Clandinin's (1992) notion of teachers as curriculum makers, they consider how students shape curriculum alongside teachers in classrooms. Students' and teachers' actions and words shape not only events of the classroom but also ways that they compose and recompose their lives in school. In this way, curriculum making and identity making become intertwined.

Key words: narrative inquiry, curriculum, teacher education, teacher knowledge, student learning, identity

Dans cet article, deux professeurs de pédagogie analysent deux expériences qu'elles ont vécues, l'une avec des enfants et l'autre avec des étudiants en formation à l'enseignement. Elles trouvent des avenues pouvant favoriser l'évolution de la perception de leur propre identité et de celle des étudiants. S'inspirant d'une notion de Connnelly et de Clandinin (1992) voulant que les enseignants soient des bâtisseurs de curriculum, elles voient comment des élèves façonnent le curriculum en même temps que les enseignants. Les actions et les propos des élèves et des enseignants modèlent non seulement les événements qui ont lieu en classe, mais aussi les façons qu'ils composent et recomposent leur vie à l'école. De ce point de vue, l'évolution du curriculum et l'évolution de l'identité sont étroitement liées.

Mots clés : recherche narrative, curriculum, formation à l'enseignement, connaissances de l'enseignant, apprentissage des élèves, identité

As I walked among the desks, I saw most children working away. Bob was sitting looking at his page, and I glanced at it too. For the "what have you learned" question, he had written in upper case letters, NOTHING. I mentioned that this might not be the answer Miss Green was looking for, and that he might want to change it. (Murray Orr, 2005, p. 129)

The field note above is an example of a curriculum moment that we unpack and analyze in this article to illustrate the transformative possibilities for educators and students through attending to narrative in curriculum. By recognizing the curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) in which students, pre-service teachers, teachers, and teacher educators are engaged, we, the authors, find possibilities for shifts in our own understandings. As we tell and retell such stories, and come to a deeper awareness of how we shape and are shaped by these moments and our multiple understandings of them, we realize the transformative possibilities they provoke. Further, we gain insight into our identities and those of students by noticing and reflecting upon the mirrors and windows (Galda, 1998) provided by others' stories.

We have taken the curriculum moments in this article from two larger research projects. Murray Orr draws upon a research project in a grade-one/two classroom site where she studied the experiences of children and their teachers as they worked together in school. She observed children's identity making in the classroom and in lunchtime book clubs. Olson draws from a research project in which she followed six pre-service teachers through their Bachelor of Education program, seeking to understand how they found moments of possibility for examining their own taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching and learning. The professional knowledge landscape metaphor developed by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) suggests the professional knowledge of teacher is "composed of a wide variety of components and [is] influenced by a wide variety of people, places, and things" (p. 5.). Although our examples of curriculum moments come from very different places on the professional knowledge landscape, they were similarly provocative in terms of transformative possibilities for us and our students. Greene (1995) writes of the importance of such transformation:

I think that if I and other teachers truly want to provoke our students to break through the limits of the conventional and the taken for granted, we ourselves have to experience breaks with what has been established in our own lives; we have to keep arousing ourselves to begin again. (p. 109)

As narrative inquirers, we use a research framework developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in which they describe a "*three-dimensional narrative inquiry space*" (p. 49, italics in the original) that "allows our inquiries to travel – *inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place*" (p. 49, italics in the original). Looking back at our field texts enables us to begin by looking outwardly to students' responses. These responses lead us inward to examine our pedagogical practices and forward to transformations in our practices that we hope will lead to better transformative possibilities for students situated in teacher education and school classrooms.

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space provides a scaffold for analysis and interpretation in the form of the three dimensions: the temporal, the personal/social (a continuum between the two), and place. Using this structure allowed us to understand our curriculum moments from varied perspectives, as we "move[d] to the retelling and reliving of stories, that is, to inquiry into stories" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007, p. 33). The exploration of these three dimensions and the retelling in which we engaged led to possibilities for seeing differently.

We use Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) terms, *field texts* and *research texts*, in this article. Research texts are the final published papers we write. Field texts are field notes, transcripts, work samples, and other materials gathered in the field. Clandinin and Connelly state, "because data tend to carry with them the idea of objective representation of research experience, it is important to note how imbued field texts are with interpretation" (p. 93). As we began to explain our methods in the narrative inquiries that are the source of curriculum moments in this article, we found it helpful to recognize that interpretation and analysis had already begun prior to the writing of research texts.

INQUIRING INTO TRANSFORMATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF CURRICULUM MAKING

In this discussion of our methods and conceptual framework, we consider curriculum to be understood as a multistoried (Olson, 2000a) course of life (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), shaped by one's experiences. In this definition we draw upon Connelly and Clandinin's notion of teachers as curriculum planners and consider how students make curriculum alongside teachers in classrooms. We understand curriculum in narrative terms (Carr, 1986; Carter, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) knowing that continuity and situation (Dewey, 1938) shape our lives. Sfard and Prusak (2005) highlight the relationship between narrative and identity: "Lengthy deliberations led us to the decision to *equate identities with stories about persons*. No, no mistake here: We did not say that identities were *finding their expression* in stories—we said they *were stories*" (p. 14, italics in original). Recognizing that each student and teacher is engaged in the act of composing a life (Bateson, 1990) and learning along the way (Bateson, 1994) is central to understanding curriculum in these ways.

As we explore two curriculum moments, the echoes of a student's actions or words, as well as those of the teacher, reverberating in their minds and bodies, can be seen as shaping not only the future events of the classroom but also how students and teachers compose and recompose their lives on the professional knowledge landscape. In this way, we view curriculum making and identity making as intertwined.

For us, following Dewey (1938), Schwab (1970), and Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the transformative possibilities for students, teachers, and researchers lie in the creation of spaces in which we may have experiences that encourage us to slow down and consider our multiple and shifting identities (Cooper & Olson, 1996; Santoro & Allard, 2005). A second aspect of these spaces is time to re-imagine ourselves and our worlds (Olson, 2005), to reconsider our stories to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999), following such experiences.

Although narrative writing and research have flourished and grown over the years (Carr, 1986; Egan & McEwan, 1995; Pinar, Reynolds, Slatterly & Taubman, 1996; Turner, 1996; Kearney, 2002; Lewis, 2007), Clandinin and Connelly (1994) brought to our attention the idea that

"the more difficult but important task in narrative is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change" (p. 418). Shields (2005) describes narrative inquiry as a method that "can provide a theoretical and practical framework for (re)interpreting our lived experience" (p. 179). Careful examination and exploration of stories is essential in narrative inquiry. It is tempting to focus on the word narrative but skip lightly over the word inquiry. Yet it is the inquiry into the stories that may create an educative experience as individuals find new and more expansive ways to interpret their own and others' experiences. The retelling "can lead to seeing experience from different perspectives and can lead to a new spiral of retellings" (Olson, 2000b, p. 350). In this article, we inquire into narratives of two curriculum moments to help us imagine curriculum afresh. In the retelling of these moments we uncover multiple tensions that cause us to pause and see ourselves from slightly different perspectives and to glimpse transformative possibilities for ourselves and for students. Attending to tensions is an important means to understand the complex ways we negotiate curriculum in schools (Clandinin et al, 2006; Craig, 2006; Hinchman & Oyler, 2000; Olson & Craig, 2005).

We view the relationships between teachers and students as central in creating spaces for transformative curriculum encounters. The layers of knowledge that characterize this relationship are multiple, complex, and intimately tied to our selves. Lyons (1990) discusses the ethical and epistemological dimensions and dilemmas embedded in these layered relationships.

Implied in the interactions between teachers and students...is the relationship between a teacher's views of knowing and his or her assessment of students as knowers, on the one hand, and students' own perspectives, on the other. It can be illustrated by the concept of nested epistemologies, or nested knowing. (p. 173)

We use the metaphor of windows and mirrors to interpret the nested epistemologies of the people in the curriculum moments we describe. In reconsidering these curriculum moments, we begin to explicate the nested knowing that we bring to our teaching, and by finding windows into the epistemologies of our students we also find mirrors that reflect

on our own pedagogical practices. Opportunities to inquire into curriculum moments, both in the moment and in later reflection (Schon, 1983), can surface various dimensions or layers (Atwood, 1988) of knowledge that previously escaped awareness.

A CURRICULUM MOMENT IN A GRADE-ONE/TWO CLASSROOM: *I Learned NOTHING.*

ANNE MURRAY ORR

As part of my doctoral research (Murray Orr, 2005), I spent three days a week in a grade-one/two classroom in a multicultural urban school in Western Canada. During this time, I also facilitated a lunchtime book group with students from this class. The following field note is about a moment during a spring morning in that classroom. Miss Green¹ was the classroom teacher and Bob was one of the students; I came to know both in class and in the lunchtime book conversations. The class had just finished an experiment called Colour Fun, involving mixing three colours of Jello together in various combinations. There had been excitement as this activity was carried out; most children seemed to enjoy the sensation of squishing the Jello together in small clear plastic bags. Then it was time to write about the experiment and Miss Green gave each child a worksheet. In the following field text, Murray Orr describes what happened next.

The children were to complete a sheet about the Jello experiment, which involved drawing a picture of what happened, and then writing about 1) what you did and 2) what you learned. There were about three lines for each answer. As I walked among the desks, I saw most children working away on this. Bob was sitting looking at his page, and I glanced at it too. For the "what have you learned" question, he had written in upper case letters, NOTHING. I mentioned that this might not be the answer Miss Green was looking for, and that he might want to change it. He looked at me seriously, and remained still. He wasn't laughing about this, or showing it to anyone else. I wondered what was going through his head. I'm sure he already did know what colors the Jello would turn when mixed, so he probably hadn't learned something new there...so why wasn't he allowed to say so...I am implicated in this, I realize. I am so much a part of this school story, the story that says that fulfilling the teacher's

expectations is more important than saying what you really think. (Murray Orr, 2005, p. 129)

Windows and Mirrors: Transformative Possibilities for Bob and Murray Orr

My initial reaction to Bob's "NOTHING" response was caught up in concerns about how Bob might be seen as impudent or rude. As I reflected on this incident some time later, in moving from field text to research text, I was struck by Bob's honesty and courage. No one else was doing anything remotely like this, and he did not have support or encouragement from other children in the class. He was making a solitary stand. He may have been attempting to create a situation of tension with Miss Green, but it seemed to me that Bob was simply being open in writing that he had learned nothing. I was aware of my unease, my worry that he might be storied negatively. I wanted Bob to back down, to erase his response, to write something more acceptable. I recognized, in retelling that moment, how fraught with contradictions my own stance was as a researcher in that classroom as I struggled with wanting to help make Bob over into my version of a good student.

Using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) as my framework, I considered this curriculum moment in relation to the dimensions of the temporal, the personal/social, and place. Moving first into the personal/social dimension, I was, on one hand, trying to create spaces for children to play and work with their stories to live by through the lunchtime book group and other times I spent with them in school. On the other hand, I found myself wanting to make Bob over, to position him differently in the classroom, to step in and not only interrupt the story of who Bob was, but also Bob's own story of who he was, his story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). These were the conflicting stories I was personally living in this moment. Not until later, however, as I considered the moment within the framework of the three dimensional narrative inquiry space, reflecting on the personal and the social implications of that moment, as well as into the dimensions of time and place, did I understand the importance of this moment for me as a researcher and a teacher. I knew I had bumped against something, but did not know what until later when I

was away from the school in a different space as I moved from field text to research text. This realization highlights the temporal aspect of my inquiry into this moment.

Continuing to consider the personal/social dimension of narrative inquiry, it appeared to me that by answering "NOTHING" as a response to the question about what he had learned, Bob was bumping against a dominant social narrative of how a good student behaves. I learned this story of school (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) as a student; I knew good students work to please their teachers rather than say what they really think. Good teachers, correspondingly, encourage students to be docile and please others. Although there are other possible narratives of what makes a good student, it is this version I seemed to embody in this moment. I imagined a potential tension was brewing between Bob and his teacher who I felt sure would not be pleased with his answer. My words to Bob revealed a place of tension in my relationship with Bob, one I had not seen before. Why did I want to help Bob come up with a more acceptable answer? I fell into the position of a good teacher in the story of school, trying to help Bob become a good student, at the very moment when Bob was providing a glimpse of an alternative way to live in school by saying what he really thought.

Place, the third dimension of narrative inquiry space, is relevant because it is within the four walls of the school where this moment occurred. Had Bob and I been in another setting, his authentic (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2007) response to the question about what he had learned would not have been noteworthy and I would not have reacted by asking him to change his response. On the "storied school landscape" (Clandinin et al, 2006, p. 36), however, we were living and responding to one another and to the colour change activity within a plot line already established, one that had clear expectations for how we might act and respond.

Returning to the notion of transformative possibilities in curriculum moments, I began to see how, in slowing down that moment, by walking around that moment and considering it through the framework of a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space as I wrote, I engaged in a transformative process. My understanding of who I am/was as a researcher and teacher shifted as I glimpsed myself in the mirror this

moment provided for me, and saw that my story to live by was not as smooth as I might have liked to imagine.

The temporal dimension comes into play again as I direct my focus to the present day. I am now a beginning teacher educator, one who carries the faces and voices of Bob and his classmates with me into the university classrooms where I spend my days with pre-service and in-service teachers. How does the transformative process of retelling that curriculum moment with Bob shape me as a teacher educator? As I develop course outlines and assignments, Bob's words, "I learned nothing," help me try to develop course experiences that are engaging, educative, and replete with transformative possibilities. I struggle to respond to students who indicate, perhaps in ways more subtle than Bob's, that they feel they are learning nothing in my courses. I attempt to make spaces in both the in- and out-of-classroom places (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) of my courses for conversation around such tensions, rather than shoving them beneath the surface. Is this enough? I will keep trying as new possibilities emerge. My story to live by as a teacher educator is continually being retold as I learn from experiences such as the moment with Bob I have considered here.

NARRATIVE ENCOUNTERS IN TEACHER EDUCATION: *Whose Stories Count?*

MARGARET OLSON

Students come to the Bachelor of Education program having a wealth of narrative knowledge of how schools work, knowledge constructed over at least sixteen years of experience in schools as students (Lortie, 1975; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). Although this narrative knowledge of schools has been largely unexamined, it forms the lens through which each student makes sense of the professional knowledge presented to them (Craig & Olson, 2002; Olson, 1995; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). As a beginning university teacher, I struggled with finding ways to bring the narrative perspective I knew was so important into the university setting that seemed so full of theoretical abstractions.

In my tenth year of working in university classrooms, I continue to be intrigued and baffled by the multi-layeredness of both the process and the curriculum of teacher education. I imagine pre-service teachers

at a nexus as both students of teaching and teachers of students spending some of their time in university classrooms as students and some of their time in school classrooms as teachers. The relationships and tensions between the curriculum of teacher education and the curriculum of schools provide a myriad of encounter points to examine. I hope to enable them to integrate these two worlds as well as find links between theoretical abstractions and their individual narrative knowing of schools and classrooms.

One of the courses I teach is a Sociology of Education course for first-year Bachelor of Education students, a course developed collaboratively over several years with other teacher educators. Although some might refer to this process as creating and revising a course, this assertion implies that the course is not an integral part of an instructors' narrative authority (Olson, 1995; Olson, *in press*). Instead, I see such collaborative course re-development as an example of teacher educators storying and restorying (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) a course as each brings new ways of teaching and learning to their conversations and practice.

Although many changes in the course have occurred over the years, a main focus continues to be enabling students to uncover inequities in the present school system and examine ways to transform schools to better fulfill the equity premise for all students. As Santoro and Allard (2005) point out, "working from the personal to the more general appeared to help these student-teachers gain some insight into the centrality of class and ethnicity within education" (p. 872). Therefore, another closely aligned focus of this course is to enable pre-service teachers to examine their own taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in their narrative knowledge about schooling. Three main questions frame the work in this course: Who am I as a person and a learner? What is the socio-political context of schooling? and What kind of educator do I hope to be and what do I imagine my practice will be as I begin my journey into teaching? The nine-week course includes a variety of activities to enable students to examine their narrative knowing: base groups, narrative journal writing (see Craig & Olson, 2002), use of a critical literacy framework, participation in learning centres focused on poverty, and a cultural capital auction (see Olson, *in press*).

I continually struggle in my teaching to find ways to help students articulate, examine, confirm and/or transform their narrative knowledge in more informed ways. An assignment that focuses on curricular justice invites students to examine their narrative knowledge using a paradigmatic framework developed by Connell (1993). In this assignment, students use the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space to look both inward and outward as they describe a curricular event or activity they have experienced. They then analyze this event or activity based on Connell's three principles of curricular justice, examining curriculum from three distinct points of view: the least advantaged, democratic decision making, and the historical production of equality. We then ask students to reconstruct or restore this event or activity in ways that are more curricularly just. Through this assignment, we ask students to "rethink what they thought they knew" (Carse, 1986, p. 125), to restore their experience in more equitable ways.

The following story is an excerpt from Pat's curricular justice assignment which was part of the field text from a larger research project I had carried out.

I did my practicum in a grade four classroom. We were doing the unit Nova Scotia: Our Heritage in Social Studies. My cooperating teacher told me how much he enjoyed doing this unit with the students each year. He had a wealth of information and things that he had collected over many years that we would use to prepare the room. We worked hard to get the room ready. I was proud of how the room looked, and felt a real sense of accomplishment as students entered that morning, ready to start our new unit. I hoped they would be as excited as I was. As I looked around the room I saw many examples of our heritage. Various tartans from different clans were on display. Bagpipes, and maps of Scotland added to the atmosphere. I stopped to admire a picture on the bulletin board. In it was a young girl with sparkling blue eyes and flowing reddish-tinged hair. It could have been me. I turned my head to look down at Maria, a small, black-haired, dark-eyed, dark-skinned girl standing beside me. She too looked at the picture, looked at the room, then looked at me with puzzled eyes. Suddenly it hit me. Everything in the room reflected my own and my cooperating teacher's Scottish heritage. Where was any representation of this little girl's story? her heritage? How many other students' stories had we neglected? The unit was

entitled Nova Scotia: Our Heritage. Yet we were only representing one culture, one heritage – our own.

Windows and Mirrors: Transformative Possibilities for Pat and Olson

I now look at this curriculum moment in relation to the three dimensions of narrative inquiry: the temporal, the personal/social, and place. Students (and teachers) are often unaware that there are many possible ways to tell their stories. Looking outwardly at what Pat had written, I realize that using a process of narrative inquiry, in this case shaped by Connell's three principles of curricular justice, enabled Pat to see that the story of grade-four social studies she was learning from her cooperating teacher was only one possible way to create the social studies curriculum story in that classroom. At the same time, Pat's story alerts me to the importance of place. When Pat shifted from the university to the public school classroom context, she was thrilled by how much she was learning from her cooperating teacher as he shared with her his ways of teaching this unit. She was very pleased with the information she was gathering and saw this teacher as a very knowledgeable man with whom she was fortunate to be working. Looking outward to the larger context of teacher education, it seems to me that this apprenticeship version of teacher education in which knowledge is passed down from expert to novice is one pre-service teachers seem to expect and find comfort in. Looking inward to my own teaching in the university context, I can see that asking preservice teachers to critically inquire into their experiences conflicts with the apprenticeship and transmission modes they expect to find in the public school system. Looking forward, I wonder how I can work with students in the university setting to help them see the relevance of an inquiry stance within public school classrooms.

Looking outwardly to Pat and her cooperating teacher, I observe that as they worked together, Pat seemed to feel a real sense of accomplishment as she learned from her cooperating teacher and made contributions herself. Temporally, I see that as Pat looked back at her past cultural and school experiences, she was confirmed in her own knowledge as well as informed by his as they both lived a familiar story of Scottish heritage. This story mirrors for me that I need to continually

stay awake to how I might be perpetuating my own cultural and teacher education experiences. Although I believe that a sense of professional camaraderie and collaboration is crucial in the professional development of pre-service teachers, I worry when a sense of inquiry seems to be missing from the relationship. Although I know that I am looking at this story from a different place on the professional knowledge landscape, I worry that fitting into the school culture can also lead to non-critical enculturation if an inquiry stance is not encouraged in the schools. On the other hand, perhaps it is exactly this different context that provides pre-service teachers the distance to inquire into their practices.

Connell's three principles of curricular justice provided a framework for students like Pat to reposition themselves in relation to their students and begin to re-imagine in more inclusive and socially just ways the curriculum stories they were living. A moment of transformative possibility did occur for Pat when she shifted from focusing inwardly on her own and her cooperating teacher's narrative knowing of Scottish heritage and, in encountering Maria's puzzled gaze, realized that this display did not reflect Maria's heritage story. I believe looking outward to Connell's theoretical principles provided an impetus for this transformation.

This assignment enabled Pat and others to slow down enough in the busy public school classroom to inquire into their taken-for-granted assumptions. My reflection on this moment has also allowed me to slow down and inquire into my own teaching. Although I believe this assignment provided a link across contexts, I also wonder if it might create more tension for some as they try to juggle being both a student and a teacher. I find being a student of teaching a very reflexive position, but pre-service teachers do not always feel the same sense of learning, especially when they think they are already supposed "to know."

As I look forward I now wonder how I as a teacher educator might better enable pre-service teachers (and perhaps by implication, their cooperating teachers as well) to value an inquiry stance as part of their teaching practice.

RE-IMAGINING CURRICULUM: WHERE MIGHT THESE STORIES LEAD?

What are some of the ways we might re-imagine curriculum as we look back at the stories told by Murray Orr and Olson about themselves and their students/research participants? One aspect that is fore grounded for us concerns the layers of school stories in which we are immersed as we tell our own narratives. We have an embodied knowing of the ways curricula can inform us, sometimes urging us and our students to conform to a good student story. Murray Orr, living out her embodied knowing of the good student/good teacher story, found herself wishing that Bob would conform to such a story, while Olson, in retelling Pat's story, realized how the social justice curriculum may subtly have urged students to conform to the definition of social justice, a reflection of broader worldviews held by their professor. Yet these moments did hold transformative possibilities for Murray Orr and Olson, perhaps because they were able to slow the moments down enough to consider them from different perspectives. We wonder if creating spaces for slowing down even a few of the moments in our classrooms may provide opportunities for transformation.

For Murray Orr, returning to the school with her writing to share with Bob, several months after this encounter, seemed to be a way to attend to this curriculum moment with him. Although Bob did not comment directly on this part of Murray Orr's writing about him, he did begin to tell stories of himself as resisting the *good student* story of school. Perhaps sharing this story with Bob was a way to engage him in a process of retelling his story to live by (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). Sharing with Bob the tensions this story uncovered, as Murray Orr returned to it over time in her own writing, and each time she returned to the school to share more of her writing with Bob, may have provided the kind of space in which transforming might begin, for both Murray Orr and Bob.

Reflecting on Murray Orr's story of Bob, who wrote "I learned nothing" on his worksheet, we imagine Murray Orr's deepening knowledge of herself as a researcher in Bob's classroom, as a parent of school-aged children, and as a teacher who knew that Bob was going to get himself in trouble with that line. Bob too seemed to bring his own

epistemology to bear on the situation, writing not what someone else might want to hear, but deciding to write what he really thought. Murray Orr found a window into Bob's epistemology in this moment, one that helped her learn more about her own story to live by. When we consider that curricular moment through the framework of the three dimensions of narrative inquiry space, we begin to uncover the multiplicity that moment contained. Murray Orr's nested knowing (Lyons, 1990) reminds researchers that there are multiple layers of knowledge in every classroom interaction.

Reflecting on Olson's story of Pat, we consider that to create moments and spaces of possibility within classrooms, teachers benefit from having experienced the process themselves in their pre-service teacher education programs and in their ongoing professional learning (Olson & Craig, 2001). Creating spaces in teacher education where living and telling our stories, retelling and re-imagining our lives, can occur is complex because, as MacIntyre (1984) points out, a practice is "a mode of understanding which has been transmitted often through many generations" (p. 201). When one of the most dominant stories of school is that of transmission from those who know to those who do not, it becomes a difficult story to interrupt and re-imagine for teachers as well as for students. In her university classes, Olson attempts to enable pre-service teachers like Pat to value their narrative knowing by creating spaces for them to share their stories of school in ways that allow them to value their narrative knowledge and the narrative knowledge of each other similar to the processes described in the work of Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) and Lynn and Smith-Maddox (2007). However, as shown in Olson's curricular justice story, creating and valuing this space can be a difficult process. When narrative knowledge is accepted as transmitted, little inquiry takes place. Olson continually finds herself living in the tension between supporting pre-service teachers' stories and interrupting them with different possible versions to open inquiry spaces rather than only narrative spaces. We believe these inquiry spaces create potential for narrative transformations to begin for pre-service teachers. The curricular justice assignment can provide one way to do this only when we are successful in presenting it to pre-service teachers as an opportunity for transformation rather than conformation. Finding a

balance within the nested relational knowing between pre-service teachers and herself continually shifts moment by moment as Olson's and the pre-service teachers' knowledge is simultaneously informed and transformed by each other in conversation. Other nested layers of knowing occur when pre-service teachers spend time with their cooperative teachers in school classrooms. As Olson remembers Pat's story, she now wonders how it might help her retell her own experience in ways that are more educative for future students.

Perhaps if we wish to imagine curriculum afresh, we must use the moments our relationships with students and one another provide as our starting points, to, as Greene (1995) suggests, continually "begin again." Inquiring into the layers of knowing we and students find in small moments in our classrooms, and into the tensions that occur in our teaching and learning, seems to us a path that holds promise, a path that helps us think about curriculum as something we create together with our students in those ongoing moments of possibility.

NOTES

¹ All names of research participants are pseudonyms.

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